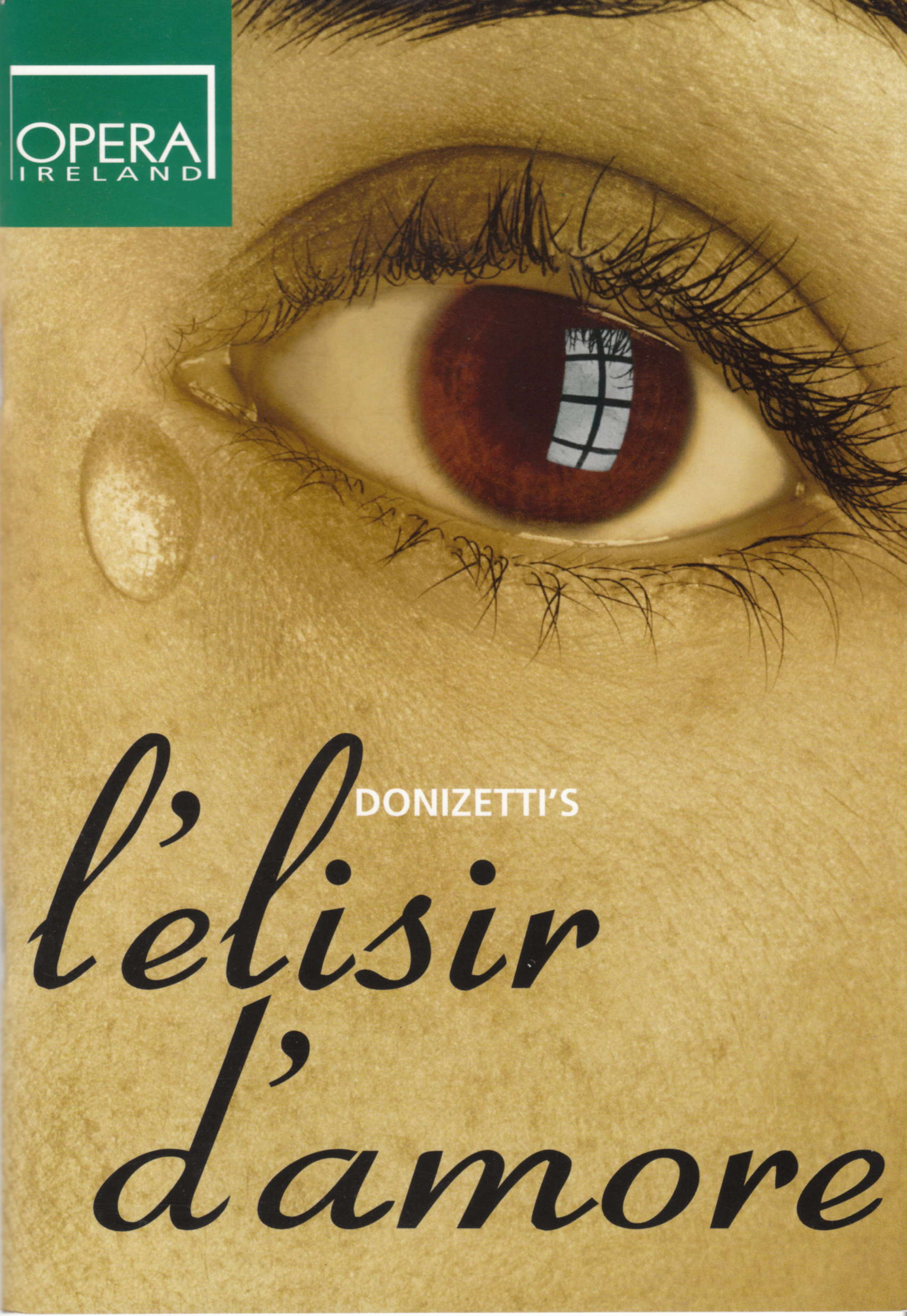

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l'elisir
d'amore

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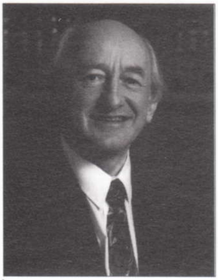
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND THE GAELTACHT

MR. MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, T.D.

It is a great pleasure for me personally, and as Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, to congratulate Opera Ireland on becoming the country's first professional national opera company.

Ireland as a nation has had an impact on the world of the arts that is disproportionate to its size as a country. Throughout the world the names of the famous figures of Irish literature, such as Maria Edgeworth, James Joyce, Wilde and Shaw are widely known. The paintings of Jack B. Yeats have received international recognition. Yet Irish opera has not enjoyed the same international success as its counterparts in other areas of the arts. Opera Ireland intends to redress this imbalance and to reflect accurately Ireland's place and role in the world of modern opera. An ever increasing number of Irish singers are achieving success in the opera houses of Europe and beyond, but are rarely heard by Irish audiences. Opera Ireland will endeavour to make performance opportunities available to these performers and to facilitate Irish audiences who are eager to see performances of the highest standards given by Irish artists.

Opera Ireland also intends to create training and employment opportunities in the equally crucial areas of technical presentation and production. The availability of a pool of highly qualified and experienced experts in these fields will help to establish Ireland as a centre of excellence for opera and in so doing, make opera more attractive and accessible to the widest possible audience.

The current productions of *La Bohème* and *L'elisir d'amore*, coupled with next spring's *Macbeth* and *Marriage of Figaro*, constitute an ambitious programme which I am confident will excite and stimulate Irish audiences. I wish all those involved in this programme every success. I would aslo like to take this opportunity to wish Opera Ireland continuing success for the future.



OPERA IRELAND

presents a new production of

L'elisir d'amore

Opera in two acts
SUNG IN ITALIAN

Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Felice Romani after Scribe's libretto for Auber's *Le philtre*

Conductor	Mark Shanahan Fergus Sheil (8 December)
Director	Mike Ashman
Designer	Bernard Culshaw
Lighting Designer	Paul Keogan

Opera Ireland Chorus
Chorus Master Fergus Sheil

RTÉ Concert Orchestra (*Leader* Michael d'Arcy)
by kind permission of the RTÉ Authority

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN
December 2, 4, 6 and 8 1996 at 7.30 pm

There will be one interval of 25 minutes

Edition: Casa Ricordi – BMG Ricordi SpA. Milan

Surtile translation: Kenneth Chalmers (by arrangement with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden)

General Manager David Collopy

Grant-aided by the Arts Council

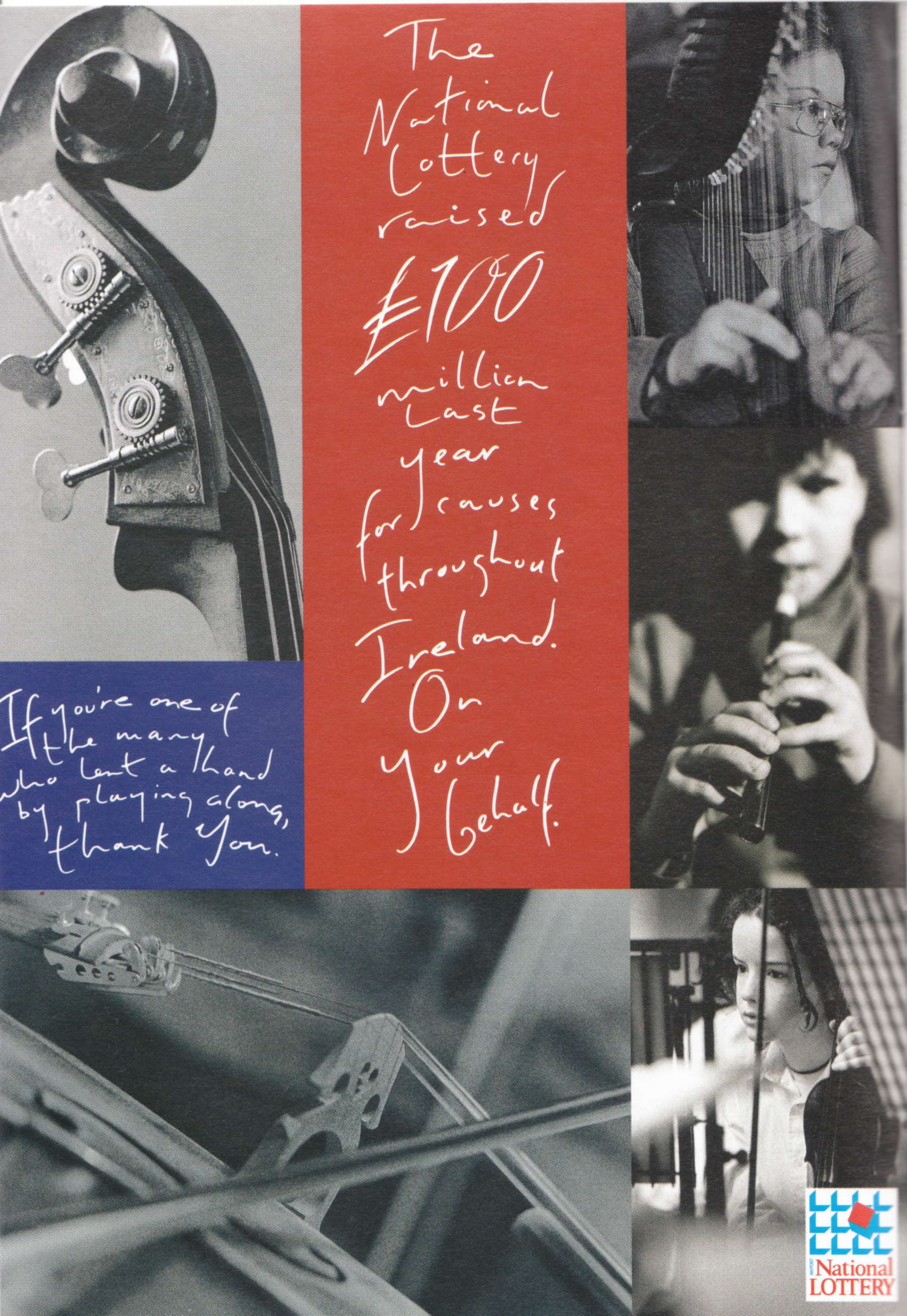


CAST

Adina, *a farm ownerr*	Majella Cullagh
Nemorino, *a young peasant*	David Newman
Belcore, *a sergeant*	Steven Page
Dulcamara, *a quack doctor*	Roderick Earle
Gianetta, *a peasant girl*	Roisín Toal

Répétiteur	Lesley Anne Sammons
Stage Manager	Annie Rushworth
Assistant Stage Managers	Breege Walters Olivia Quigley

L'elisir d'amore was first performed at Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan, on 12 May, 1832. The first Dublin performance was at the Theatre Royal on February 27, 1838. The first DGOS production was at the Gaiety Theatre on April 26, 1958.



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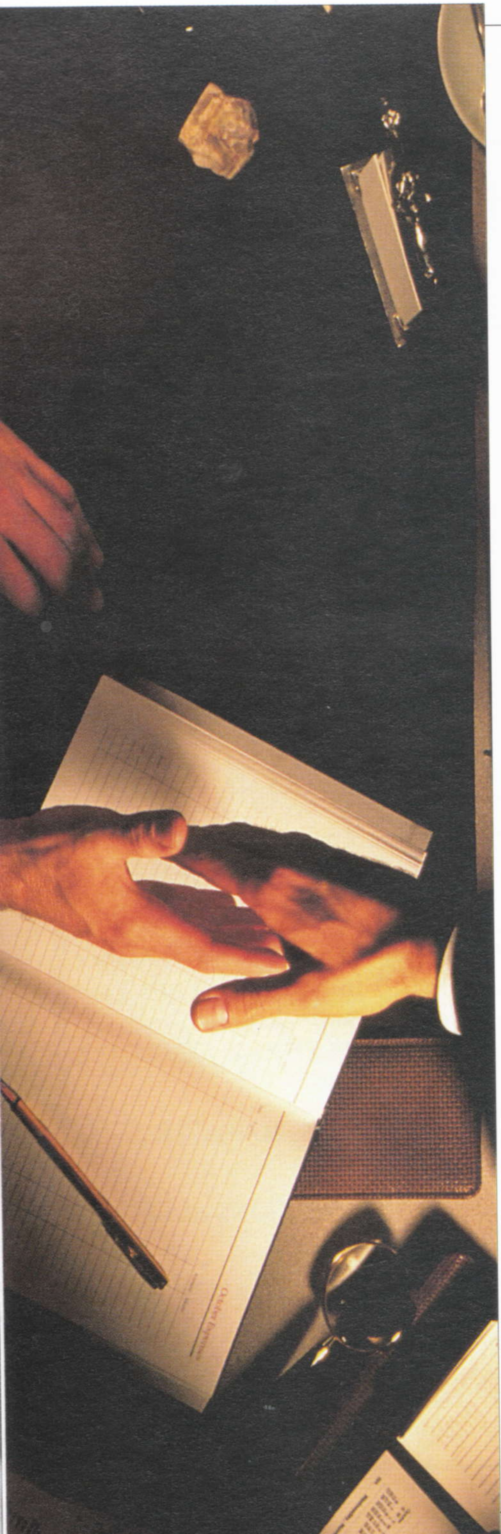
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SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

Entrance to Adina's farm. As the curtain rises, Gianetta, a village girl, together with other harvesters, expresses her pleasure in resting when the mid-day sun is at its hottest: "Bel conforto al mietitore." (It is a great comfort to the harvester.) Nemorino, gazing from a distance at Adina, who is sitting reading, gives vent to his feelings: "Quanto e' bella, quanto e' cara." (How beautiful and dear she is.) The more he sees her, the more he loves her but he knows that she has no time for him. Besides, she knows everything "whilst he feels only a fool who sighs": "lo son sempre un idiota, io non so che sospirar." In order to amuse the others, Adina reads aloud the legend of the love potion which made Isolde fall in love with Tristan: "Della crudele Isotta il bel Tristano ardea." (The handsome Tristan was longing for the cruel Isolde.) Tristan had no hope until he was given an elixir which made Isolde love him forever. "Elisir di si perfetta, di si rara qualita." (An elixir of perfect and rare quality.) Suddenly a drum and military march is heard and the conceited Sergeant Belcore arrives with a troop of soldiers. Immediately he takes it for granted that Adina will fall for him; he compares himself with Paris: "Come Paride vezzoso porse il pomo alla più bella." (The handsome Paris gave the apple to the most beautiful of the three Graces.) Belcore gives flowers instead as "fair" exchange for Adina's heart; he is after all a conqueror. Adina, not one to capitulate easily to any man and well aware of Belcore's conceit, is nevertheless flattered. She finds his peacock feathers fascinating; but when Belcore asks her to marry him she asks for a little time to think it over. The harvesters are sure that Adina can handle the situation. Only Nemorino is desperate, seeing in Belcore a dashing and self-assured rival. Nemorino tries to talk to Adina but she sends him off to his uncle who is dangerously ill: he might leave his money to someone else and then Nemorino will die of hunger. But to Nemorino death from hunger or from love is the same. When Adina tells him plainly that she cannot ever love him – he may be good and modest but she is capricious and changeable – Nemorino touchingly asks her why? "Ask the alluring breeze why it flies without settling", she answers. "The river too, knowingly finds its death in the ocean", Nemorino adds, "and I would die for you." Adina goes on: "Per guarir di tal pazzia, ch'e pazzia l'amor costante." (To cure yourself of such madness of constant love, you should, like me, take a new sweetheart every day.) In vain Nemorino swears that he can love only Adina.

Later; the village square. At the sound of a cornet, the villagers gather in the square, curious to find out what is happening. A mysterious stranger arrives, impressively carrying papers and bottles. He announces: "Udite, udite, or rustici; attenti, non fiatate." (Listen, listen, country-folk; pay attention, do not even breathe.) "Ch'io sono quel gran medico dottore enciclopedico, chiamato Dulcamara." (I am the great Dulcamara, the internationally famous doctor.) He proclaims his magic powers of healing; his medicine has authentic and sealed certificates. "It destroys bugs and rats. A septuagenarian became the grandfather of ten children; within a week afflicted widows found new joy . . . There are sweethearts for all the young men. It also cures paralysis," and so forth. Dr. Dulcamara says his medicine is so cheap, he is practically giving it away: "Tutta Europa sa ch'io vendo niete men di nove lire." (All Europe knows that I normally charge others nine lire.) When Dulcamara finishes his sales-patter and the

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villagers leave, Nemorino thinks that perhaps Heaven sent this man especially for him. Nemorino knows what he wants: the love potion of Queen Isolde. Dulcamara has it, of course, and sells Nemorino the elixir of love, which is nothing more than a bottle of cheap Bordeaux, for one ducat.

This is all the money he has. Dulcamara warns him that the elixir will be effective only after twenty-four hours – enough time for Dulcamara to get away – and no one must know of this transaction as it is, strictly speaking, illegal. Nemorino's joy knows no bounds: "Obbligato, ah! si obbligato! son felice son contento. Elisire di tal bontà benedetto chi ti fa." (I am very obliged, pleased and content. Bless him who makes such excellent elixirs), he exclaims. Left alone, Nemorino finds the elixir delicious and already feels more confident and assured. Adina is surprised to find him so nonchalant, especially when he tells her that his heart will be cured within a day. But it is his apparent indifference that piques her; so when Belcore appears, she consents to marry him in a week's time. Nemorino laughs in their faces, believing he will change all this. Just then, however, the Sergeant receives orders from his captain to leave at dawn.

Because of Nemorino's superior attitude, Adina agrees to get married that very day. This shatters Nemorino's assurance and pathetically he pleads: "Adina credimi, te ne scongiuro non puoi sposarlo, te ne assicuro, aspetta ancora un gioro solo." (Believe me, Adina, you cannot marry him. Wait for one more day.) While Nemorino shouts for Dr. Dulcamara to come to his aid, Adina invites everybody to her wedding breakfast.

INTERVAL - 25 minutes

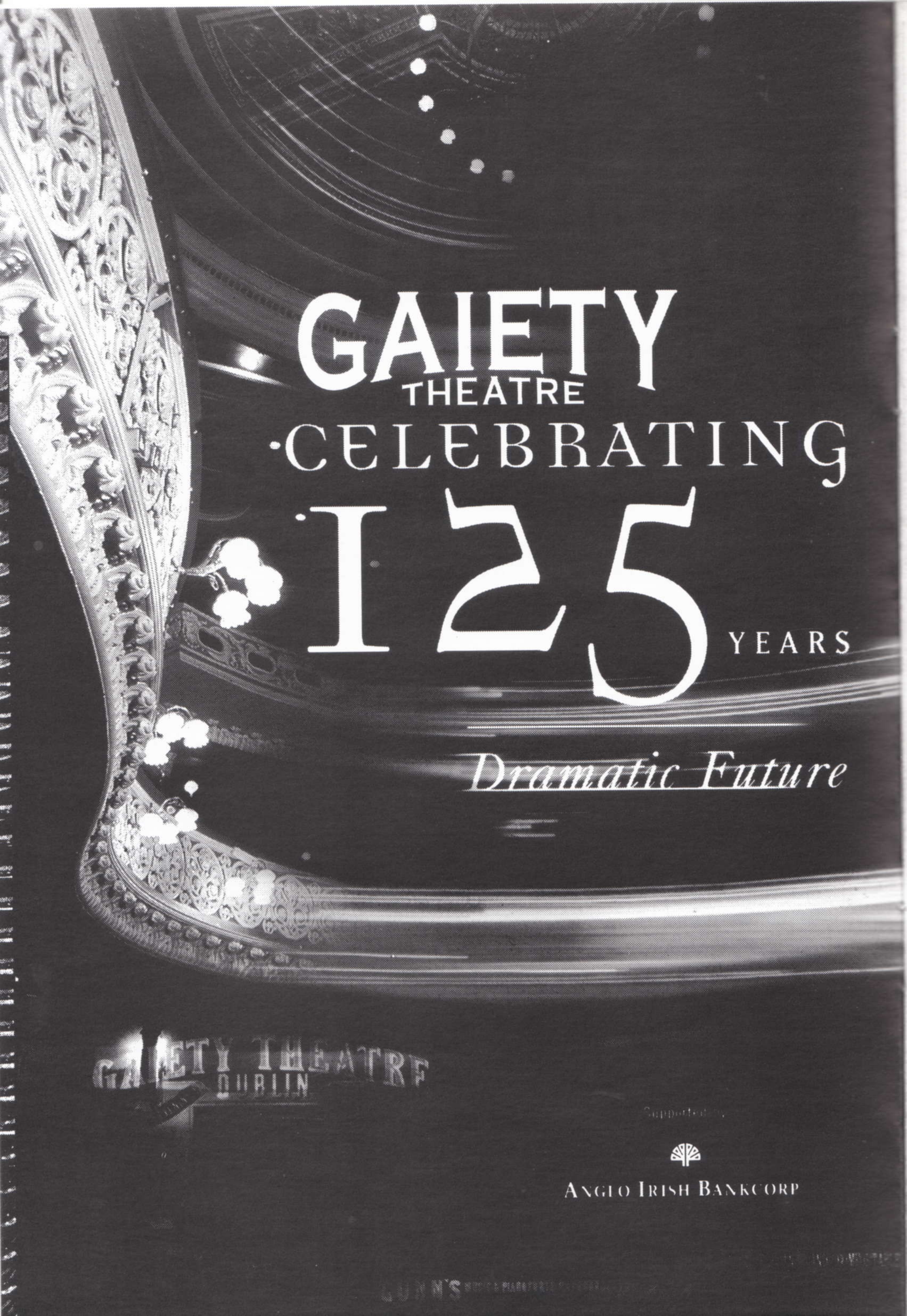
ACT TWO

A room in Adina's farm. Adina, Belcore, Dulcamara and Gianetta are sitting at table while other villagers are standing drinking and singing. The regimental band is playing. Dulcamara is among the guests who are enjoying Adina's wedding breakfast. At his suggestion, he sings a duet with the bride-to-be. The song "La Nina gondoliera e il senator Tredenti," tells of how Nina, a gondolier, refused a rich senator for poor Zanetto.

When the notary arrives, Adina is reluctant to sign the marriage contract and says she will wait until the evening. She does not really want to marry Belcore and tries to convince herself that the postponement is to allow Nemorino to be present. All leave the room



Frieda Hempel as Adina and Enrico Caruso as Nemorino at the New York Metropolitan Opera.


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except Dulcamara, who cannot resist the sight of the banquet. Nemorino arrives feeling that all is lost. Dulcamara confidently prescribes another bottle of the elixir and reassures Nemorino that not only Adina but all the girls in the village will fall for him immediately. Nemorino, however has no money and Dulcamara gives him fifteen minutes to find some.

Belcore presently returns and hearing Nemorino's need persuades him to enlist in the army where he will immediately receive twenty scudos. Nemorino is delighted to sign on and runs to find Dulcamara, so that he can buy the elixir. Belcore is pleased with his clever stroke in enlisting his rival.

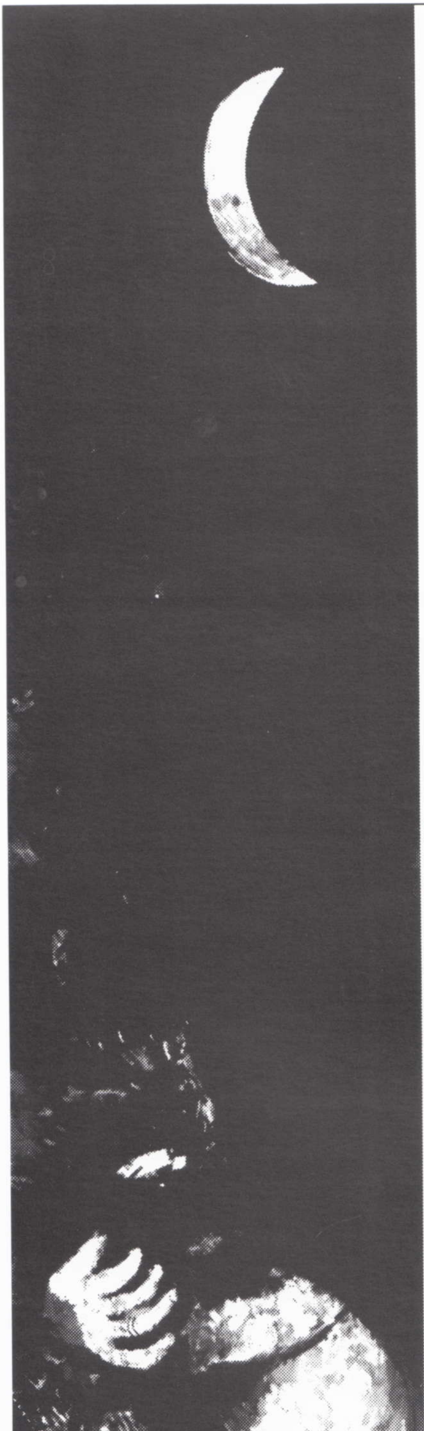


The soprano Sabina Heinefetter, the first to sing Adna in Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore.

Later; a country courtyard. Ginnetta announces to the other village girls the grand news that Nemorino's rich uncle has died leaving him a fortune. They all flock round him. Presently Adina arrives with Dulcamara and they are both astonished to see Nemorino so happy. Neither Nemorino nor Adina yet know about Nemorino's inheritance and he attributes his sudden popularity to the effect of the elixir, Adina even feels jealous at being almost ignored: "O Amor, ti vendichi di mia fredezza, chi mi disprezza m'e forza amar." (Love has punished me for my indifference. I now love one who rejects me.) Adina, having heard from Belcore about Nemorino's enlisting in the army, tries to speak to him but Nemorino, carried away by his success with the other girls, is convinced that the elixir has begun to work on Adina as well. Dulcamara takes full credit: perhaps he has indeed a magical elixir after all. He tells Adina that he gave the elixir to Nemorino who loved her desperately and had even sold his freedom to pay for it. Adina is deeply moved. She is sure now that she loves him too. Dulcamara offers Adina an elixir which can cure her and make a hundred men fall in love with her; but Adina admits she only wants Nemorino whom she will win back in her own way.

When Nemorino reappears, confident that Adina loves him, he expresses his feeling in the famous romanza: "Una furtiva lagrima negli occhi suoi spunto . . ." (A furtive tear escaped from her eye . . .)

Adina enters and gives him back his enlisting papers: "Prendi: per me sei libero." (Take them. I have bought back your freedom.) She advises him to remain at home where everyone loves him, but when she capriciously says good bye, Nemorino declares that as he is obviously not loved by her, he would rather



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remain in the army and die a soldier's death. Adina can no longer restrain herself and declares her love: "Forget my past unkindness. I swear to love you always."

Nemorino is deliriously happy. Belcore appears with his soldiers followed by Dulcamara and the villagers. Belcore quickly understands what has happened and accepts defeat with some grace but still retains his conceit. "Belcore will always have as many women as he wants. The world is full of them," he says. This is a great opportunity for Dulcamara to extol the powers of his wondrous elixir which everybody now wants to buy. He also lets slip the news that Nemorino is heir to his uncle; the elixir, undoubtedly, helped in this respect too. Nemorino and Adina are overjoyed and everybody except Belcore praises the great Dulcamara, who departs triumphantly.



Adamo Didur as Dulcamara at the New York Metropolitan Opera. Enrico Caruso is standing at right centre.





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The story of how *L'elisir d'amore* came to be written is vividly told by Emilia Branca Romani in her biography of her husband, its librettist. The management of the Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan had been let down by a composer (name not given) who had been commissioned to provide an opera for their spring season. With only a fortnight to go before the opening the impresario, Alessandro Lanari, turned in despair to Donizetti begging him to fit up one of his old scores to suit the vocal resources of the company. "Are you having me on?" exclaimed the composer. "I'm not in the habit of patching up my own scores or anybody else's" (this was not strictly true): "it rather remains to be seen whether I've the strength of mind to do you a brand new opera in 14 days . I can promise you one, however, if Romani will co-operate; I'll have a word with him about it." And to Romani: "I give you a week to get the piece ready for me; we'll see which of us is the braver. Bear in mind, my friend, that we have a German prima donna [Heinefetter], a tenor who stutters [Genero], a buffo with a voice like a goat [Frezzolini], and a French bass [Dabadie]" – as usual he meant basso cantante, that is to say baritone – "who isn't up to much either; all the same we've got to do ourselves honour. Courage, my dear Romani, and go ahead!" With so little time at



Donizetti (in chair) with his nephew Andrea in 1847.

his disposal Romani turned not to a play but to a French libretto in which the musical numbers were ready made: Scribe's *Le philtre*, written for Auber and first performed less than a year before at (rather surprisingly) the Paris Opéra, where grandeur of the type inaugurated by *Robert le diable* was not yet *de rigueur* (later, it's true, it would migrate to the Opéra-Comique with spoken dialogue). However, Romani did not limit himself to mere translation. Several of the pieces are new, including the duet "Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera", which replaces the air sung at that point by the French heroine ("La coquetterie fait mon seul bonheur") and which so inspired Donizetti when he received it as to make him late for dinner in the Branca household. He was also delighted with Dulcamara's cavatina "Udite, udite, o rustici" (" . . . where the devil did our friend Romani get hold of all those medico-surgico-pharmaceutical terms?. .. He's a real joker, that one"). In this case, the jokes were mainly Scribe's. In general Romani humanised the drama, giving more dignity to the tenor lead, and pointing up the element of pathos.

Donizetti prided himself on his ability to write at speed — a gift further attested by the composer Adolphe Adam with whom at one point he shared lodgings in Paris. But, as William Ashbrook, the Donizetti scholar, suggests, 14 days from conception to performance is clearly an exaggeration. After all Donizetti had to rehearse the opera as well as compose it; and a letter to his father dated April 24, 1832 tells us that he had written much of the music, that the libretto was not quite complete, and that he still counted on beginning rehearsals the following week. The season had already opened the day before with Luigi Ricci's *L'orfanella di Ginevra*, and *L'elisir d'amore* would not go on until May 12. The same letter makes it clear that he had not substantially changed his views about the singers: " . . . only the tenor is passable; the soprano has a nice voice but she alone knows what words she's singing. The buffo is rather awful". This was a hard thing to say of Giuseppe Frezzolini who was accounted one of the best bassi buffi of his day though he never created a role as important as Dulcamara. Nor was the baritone a nonentity. Henri-Bernard Dabadie had had a distinguished career at the Paris Opéra where by a curious coincidence he had created the part of Jolicoeur – the equivalent of Belcore – in *Le philtre*. At the keyboard, so Mario Rinaldi tells us in his book on Romani, was the learned and experienced Vincenzo Lavigna, who later that year would take on as a private pupil a shabby, taciturn, but decidedly gifted young man from the Duchy of Parma called Giuseppe Verdi. So it is not to be wondered at if there are distant echoes of Donizetti's comedy in *Un giorno di regno*, composed eight years later, especially in the duet between tenor and baritone.

The premiere was a brilliant success which Donizetti modestly tried to play down. ("The *Gazzetta* has reported on *L'elisir d'amore*," he wrote to his teacher Simon Mayr, "and is far too kind about it – believe me, far too kind.") Berlioz, it is true, who attended the performance on May 30, found the audience inattentive and chattering so loudly that he was unable to hear a note of the music and so left before the end. However the opera ran for 33 nights to packed houses. Three years later it was revived with Maria Malibran as Adina – a role that was to be a favourite with Giuseppina Strepponi Verdi in her singing days.

"The gayest, the most delicate, the prettiest, the most original comic opera that has ever

been written in Italy since Rossini's masterpiece, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*" – such was the verdict of Emilia Branca Romani 50 years later. Today *L'elisir d'amore* shares with *Don Pasquale* the distinction of being one of the only two Donizetti operas that have never even temporarily left the international repertoire (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, it may be remembered, suffered an inter-war eclipse outside Italy). Which of them is Donizetti's comic masterpiece is open to discussion. *Don Pasquale*, which reaps the benefit of eleven years further experience, is musically denser, tighter, and more resourceful. But musical skill is not the only criterion that one brings to the judging of opera; its relation to the dramatic idea must also be considered. The strength of *L'elisir d'amore* lies in the fact that it is the perfect expression in music of a type of romantic comedy unique to its age. In the eighteenth century and up till the time of Rossini lower-class characters were either mere figures of fun or else, like Figaro, cleverer and more resourceful than their masters. Nemorino is neither. He is a self confessed noodle (to paraphrase Dulcamara):

> In the countryside around
> Many a simpleton I've found,
> But the likes of such as he
> Never grew by land or sea.

Yet he moves us to pity as well as laughter; when he is upset, we too are upset on his behalf. In such a drama musical simplicity is inevitably part of the brief. Also that popular strain that runs through Donizetti's music helps to bring us closer to the mentality of his bucolic characters. By contrast the commonplaces of eighteenth-century opera buffo even – or especially – when used by Mozart cannot help sounding faintly aristocratic .

Still more decisive for the realisation of the comedy is Donizetti's unfailing touch with the tenor voice, his ability to bring out that poetic blend of ardour and pathos peculiar to its nature often with no more than a handful of phrases placed in its most expressive register. The aria "Ange si pur" from *La favorite*, better known as "Spirto gentil," is a notable instance; and there are plenty more in *L'elisir d'amore*. For truthfulness of declamation one has only to turn to Nemorino's cavatina ("Quanto e bella, quanto e cara"). In the central episode he spreads his tribute to Adina's learning lyrically over four bars, while despatching his own self-deprecation in two with a repeated phrase that expresses to perfection his own helplessness ("lo son sempre un'idiota, io non so che sospirar"). In this way music and character are neatly matched. A particularly affecting moment occurs when Nemorino learns to his dismay that Adina intends to marry Belcore before the day is out and the elixir can take effect. The poignant melody, moving from F minor to A flat major, in which he pleads with her to wait another day generates one of Donizetti's finest lyrical ensembles, the music suffused with pity for the young man, offset by the muttered threats of Belcore that continue throughout. The idea of placing a romanza for the tenor in Act II just before the point of resolution was an inspiration of Donizetti's to which, according to Rinaldi, the poet was strongly opposed ("Believe me, a romanza in that situation would slacken the drama. What has that simple bumpkin with his pathetic whimpering got to do with a scene that should be all jollity and merry making?"). But the composer held firm; and the result is one of the finest and best-loved arias in the tenor repertoire: "Una furtiva lagrima," equally original as to form (two strophes each ending in a different key), metrical layout (seven-

syllable verse but with a final line of five syllables), and scoring (where else does one find an introduction scored for harp, bassoon, and pizzicato strings?).

The remaining principals are also rounded out. While Jolicoeur in *Le philtre* makes his proposition to Adina in plain, business-like terms and his entrance aria ("Je suis sergeant, brave et galant") is set as a trim little Auberian march *en rondeau*, Belcore is given a "simile" aria *a la* Metastasio in which he compares himself to the Trojan prince Paris awarding the apple to the most beautiful of three goddesses; this enables him to make an entrance with the fatuous grandeur of Dandini in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. But he becomes very angry when he thinks he is being made fun of ("Che cosa ha da ridere" in the terzetto from Act 1), where Jolicoeur had remained sheathed throughout in his own self-satisfaction. Only when he realises how easily he can trick his rival does Belcore recover his good humour (the duet "Venti scudi!").

Adina is no longer the heartless coquette of Scribe's libretto. Even when repulsing Nemorino in their Act I duet she cannot disguise a certain tenderness, even in its second theme ("Per guarir di tal pazzia") with its jaunty mazurka-like rhythm. The first part of her duet with Dulcamara in Act II ("Quanto amore") has its counterpart in the French opera, but the cabaletta ("Una tenera occhiatina") in which Adina trusts to her own charms to soften the heart of the man she loves is entirely new. So too is the aria "Prendi! Per me sei libero," a movement of Bellinian simplicity beneath its coloratura finery, whose effect is enhanced by its distinctly Bellinian scoring (pizzicato violins, cellos and basses, with sustaining violas divise). Dulcamara remains an unusually ripe specimen of the Italian buffo bass. Especially happy is the moment when, in the course of his salesman's patter, he temporarily runs out of words with which to describe the wonders wrought by his medicine – "known throughout the universe... and... and . . . and in other places," he concludes lamely. It is curious that Donizetti should have set the "barcarolle" which he sings with Adina in Act II to a bouncy 2/4 rhythm – all the more so since Auber had set its French equivalent in orthodox 6/8. But its reprise at the end of Act II makes a suitable lively conclusion to the opera.

JULIAN BUDDEN

MIKE ASHMAN (UK) - Director



Mike's previous productions for Opera Ireland were *La Bohéme* and *Les pêcheurs de perles* in 1987 (both designed by Bernard Culshaw) and *Tosca* in 1990. In the UK he has directed *Parsifal* and the world premiere of John Metcalf's *Tornrak* for WNO; *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Medée* for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden; *Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria rusticana* for Scottish Opera Go-Round; and numerous productions - most recently *Suor Angelica, L'heure espagnole, The Cunning Little Vixen* and Tippett's *The Knot Garden* - for the Royal College of Music Opera School. Overseas productions include the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* at Teatro Lirico, Madrid and *Der fliegende Holländer* in Oslo. From 1993 to 1996 he has been directing Wagner's *Ring* cycle for Den Norske Opera, a production which will tour the UK in 1997.

MAJELLA CULLAGH / Soprano (Ireland) – Adina



A native of Cork, she trained there under Maeve Coughlan and then at the National Opera Studio in London. She currently studies with Gerald Martin Moore. Her wide repertoire embraces roles in French, Italian, German and English operas from Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, which she sang for English Bach Festival at Covent Garden, to Menotti's *Amahl*; James Wilson's *A Passionate Man*, in which she created the role of Vanessa in Dublin in 1995; and the title role in the British premiere of Gavin Bryars' *Medea* for BBC Scotland. At Wexford in 1994 she sang in Wagner's *Das Liebesverbot* and last year she was Elsie Maynard in WNO's *Yeomen of the Guard*. Majella previously appeared with Opera Ireland as Barbarina in *Figaro* in 1991 and as Musetta in 1993. Her most recent success was as the sorceress Melissa in Handel's *Amadigi* with OTC, which she will repeat in New York in the new year before taking on the role of Clarice in Haydn's *Il mondo della luna*. She also appears extensively on the concert platform throughout Ireland and the UK and she sings the title role in the new Naxos recording of Wallace's *Maritana*.

BERNARD CULSHAW (UK) - Designer



Bernard Culshaw's association with Mike Ashman started in 1987 when they presented *La Bohème* for the then Dublin Grand Opera Society and continued with *Le pêcheurs de perles* later in the same year. Since then they have collaborated on several productions at the Royal College of Music in London as well as in Canada and for Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera and the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. Bernard recently designed the set for Jonathan Miller's production of *La traviata* for English National Opera at the London Coliseum.



SUPPORTING THE ARTS



RODERICK EARLE / Bass-baritone (UK) - Dulcamara
Born in Winchester, he was educated at Cambridge where he read music and was a Choral Scholar in St John's College Choir. After vocal studies at the RCM and with Otakar Kraus he made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Antonio in *Figaro*. Since then he has gone on to sing an impressive range of roles at Covent Garden, English National Opera and other British companies as well as further afield in Japan, Korea, Israel, Greece, Belgium, France and Italy. His repertoire, which includes a roster of unusual roles from a broad spectrum of historical and national styles, also takes in all the important bass-baritone roles of the mainstream composers of opera and choral music. In the latter field, he has travelled extensively to sing under conductors such as Järvi, Dutoit, Slatkin, Levine and Colin Davis. He also features in many sound and video recordings of opera and oratorio, including Richard Hickox's award-winning CD of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Kent Nagano's new and acclaimed recording of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*.



PAUL KEOGAN (Ireland) - Lighting Designer
Born in Dublin, he studied drama at Trinity College and at Glasgow University. Since graduating he has been working as a lighting designer on a freelance basis. Much of his work has been with dance companies such as Icontact, Daghdha and Irish Modern Dance Theatre. Since 1994 Paul has been Production Manager for Project Arts. His recent work includes *That Dublin Mood* for Opera Theatre Company, *The Silver Tassie* at London's Almeida Theatre, *Danti Dan* at Dublin's Project Theatre and The Hampstead Theatre in London; *The Gay Detective* at the Project and *The King and I* at the Olympia.



DAVID NEWMAN / Tenor (UK) - Nemorino
Born in Manchester, he studied at Trinity College of Music, where he won prizes for French song, Lieder and opera. Following his debut in *Der Rosenkavalier* and some understudy work with ENO, he sang Puccini's Rodolfo with Scottish Opera-Go-Round. Elsewhere he has sung Fenton, Nadir, Ottavio, Ferrando and the title role in Gounod's *Faust*. David is an experienced oratorio singer with over forty works in his repertoire. Notably he has performed in the Barbican, St Martin's-in-the Fields, York Minster, Durham and Winchester Cathedrals and Cheltenham Town Hall. He has also broadcast on Classic FM radio and on BBC radio and television. In 1995/96 he was Pong in Scottish Opera's *Turandot* and after his engagement with Opera Ireland he returns to sing Rodolfo in Scottish Opera's revival of *La Bohème*.

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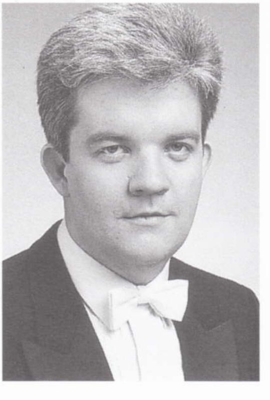
STEVEN PAGE / Baritone (UK) – Belcore

While still practising as a Trade Mark Attorney, Steven Page studied singing with Margaret Hyde. After training at the National Opera Studio he sang Alfonso (*Così*) and Nick Shadow (*Rake's Progress)* for Opera 80 (now English Touring Opera). Since than he has appeared frequently with ENO, Scottish Opera and Opera Factory as well as at the Garsington Festival and, most notably, at Glyndebourne. Abroad he has been heard in Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges* in Tel Aviv, in ONI's *Marriage of Figaro* in Belfast and as Papageno in Opera Ireland's *Magic Flute* earlier this year. Other roles in his repertoire include Don Giovanni and Leporello, Tarquinius (*Rape of Lucretia*), Albert (*Werther*), Paolo (*Boccanegra*), Almaviva (*Figaro)*, Guglielmo (*Così*), Marcello (*Bohème*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Coyle (*Owen Wingrove*) and Annubius in Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* which was premiered at Glyndebourne last year. Next on the list is Olin Blitch in Floyd's *Susannah* at Nante.



LESLEY-ANNE SAMMONS (UK) - Repetiteur

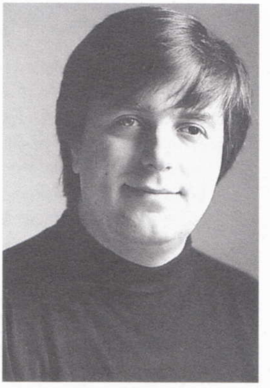
After piano studies at Trinity College, London, and the Guildhall School of Music, Lesley-Anne Sammons was awarded a place at the National Opera Studio as a répétiteur. She now works extensively in the field of opera and has been associated with Scottish Opera, English National Opera and Glyndebourne, both at the festival and on tour. In addition she has worked at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and at Wexford Festival. Most recently she was Head of Musie Staff at English Touring Opera. As Chorus Master for New Sussex Opera she will soon be preparing Weber's *Euryanthe*: other plans include *Don Giovanni* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera; and *The Magic Flute* and *Don Pasquale* for ENO.



MARK SHANAHAN (UK) – Conductor

Mark Shanahan was born in Manchester of Irish parents and studied at Chetham's School of Music. He took his B.Mus. degree at London University before joining the post-graduate conducting course at the RAM where he was awarded the Sir Henry Wood Scholarship and went on to win First prize in the NYAO Conducting Competition in its inaugural year. His recent operatic work includes *L'elisir d'amore* and *Così fan tutte* for English Touring opera and *La damnation de Faust* at the Royal Festival Hall. He is particularly associated with Italian opera and has conducted Rossini's *Il barbiere* and Verdi's *La forza del destino* for English National Opera. In Ireland he has conducted the NSOI both in concert and in opera at Wexford Festival. He has also broadcast with the RTÉCO, most recently in an acclaimed performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the NCH last month.

FERGUS SHEIL (Ireland) – Chorus Master/Conductor (8 December)



Fergus Sheil, who makes his operatic conducting debut with *L'elisir d'amore* on 8 December, was recently appointed Chorus Master/ Head of Music for Opera Ireland. He was born in Dublin and studied music at Trinity College, where he formed his own orchestra. With Arts Council assistance he studied conducting with Leon Barzin in Paris and at masterclasses in England, Germany and Italy. He began working in opera at Wexford Festival in 1993, initially as Assistant Conductor and then as Chorus Master, a function he repeated for Opera Ireland in its 1996 productions of *Tosca* and *The Magic Flute*. He has also directed contemporary works for Opera Theatre Company. Since 1989 he has conducted student, amateur and youth orchestras throughout Ireland and last year he won the BRI Conducting Competition in the UK. He was subsequently engaged by the RTECO, with whom he has already made a number of broadcasts, including some of music by young composers. He has also conducted the St Cecilia Orchestra and recently made his UK debut with the Northern Sinfonia in Durham.

ROISÍN TOAL / Soprano (Ireland) - Gianetta



Born in Co Armagh, she originally studied with Veronica Dunne and Jennie Reddin at the DIT College of Music. She currently works with répétiteurs David Wray and Patrick Zuk. While a member of the Leinster Opera Studio she participated in operatic excerpts from Italian, German, French and English operas throughout Ireland. A holder of diplomas in both music-theatre and drama, she is a past member of the RTÉ Chamber Choir and Chorus. She now sings with the National Chamber Choir where she is a regular soloist. She has participated in a number of live and broadcast concert performances as well as commercial recordings. Roisín has been a member of Opera Ireland' s professional chorus for several seasons and earlier this year she made her solo debut as Second Boy in *The Magic Flute*.

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Molony Eve Mrs
Montgomery W J Mr
Moroney Anne Ms
Moroney Michael Mr
Mortimer Marie Ms
Moylan B A Dr
Moynihan John Mr
Mulcahy Margaret Ms
Murakami Ethna Ms
Murphy Justice Francis Mr
Murphy Marie Ms
Murphy William Mr
Murphy B J Ms
Murphy John T Mr
Murray Austin C Mr
Murray Freida Ms

Neenan Eileen Mrs
Neenan William Mr
Neligan David & Miriam
Neville Anthony J Mr
New Mary Ms
Ni Dhuigneain Brid Ms
Nolan David Mr
Nolan William Mr
Ni Dhuigneain Brid Ms
Nugent Michael Mr

O'Brien F X Dr
O'Brien Herman Mr & Mrs
O'Brien J Kenneth Mr
O'Ceochain Gearoid An tAth
O'Connell Margaret V Ms
O'Connor Nuala Ms
O'Connor John & Viola
O'Connor Joyce Mrs
O'Connor Michael Mr
O'Dalaigh Tony & Margaret
O'Daly Liam Mr
O'Donnell Andrew Mr
O'Donovan Donal Mr
O'Driscoll Thomas A Mr
O'Farrell James Mr
O'Gady Judy Mrs
O'Grady Jonathan Mr
O'Hara Patricia Dr
O'Hara Rosalind Mrs
O'Hare Ann Ms
O'Hare Daniel Dr
O'Keeffe Angela Ms
O'Leary Barbara Mrs

O'Loughlin-Kennedy Katherine Ms
O'Malley Sharon Ms
O'Meara Anne Dr
O'Meara Joan Ms
O'Neill Ann Ms
O'Neill Desmond Mr
O'Neill Finbarr Mr
O'Neill Joan M Mrs
O'Neill John D Mr
O'Reilly Charles Mr
O'Reilly James & Fionnuala
O'Riada Padraic Mr
O'Riordan Eamonn Mr
O'Riordan J D Mr
O'Rourke Mona Ms
O'Rourke Terence Mr
O'Shea Finian Mr
O'Shea Mary-Rose Ms
O'Sullivan Kevin Mr
O'Sullivan Kevin J Mr

Parlon Patrick Mr
Patton Evelyn Mrs
Peart Peter Mrs
Phelan Caroline Mrs
Potter D J Mr & Mrs
Power Laurence Anthony Mr
Power Maire Mrs
Prendergast Mary Ms

Quigley Anthony & Margaret
Quinn Irene Ms

Redmond Maire Ms
Regan Brian Mr
Reid Fergus Mr
Reidy Breda Ms
Reihill Ann Ms
Rennison H H Mr
Reynolds Brid Ms
Reynolds Michael Rev
Reynolds Terry Mr
Robinson Derek Mr
Ronayne F Mr
Rossiter Brendan Mr
Rountree John Dr
Rowan Paul E Mr
Ruane James J Dr
Ryan John M Mr
Ryan N M Mr

Schnittger Charlotte Mrs
Scully Angela Ms
Shannon Lilian Dr
Shanik Gregor Prof
Shelly Denis J Mr
Sheridan Gerry A Mr
Sherry Mark Mr
Sherry Liam Mr
Skelly O D G Rev

Smith Joseph G Mr
Smyth Barbara Ms
Smyth Robert Rudd Mr
Smyth James & Pamela
Smyth J W Mr
Soese Diana Mrs
Spellman Michael Mr
Spollen Mary Ms
Stacey Thomas Mr
Stack Anne Ms
Stafford Marion Mrs
Staunton Tom Dr
Stein Edwin J Mr
Stephen Jim Mr
Stones Willie Mr
Strickland Bob Mr
Sullivan Brian Mr

Taylor T.D. Mervyn Mr
Tennyson Geraldine Ms
Thompson Frank Mr
Thorn Myles Mr
Tierney Martin Mr
Tierney Mary Mrs
Tipton G Mrs
Tobin Kieran Mr
Torsney Rosaleen Mrs
Traynor Celine Dr
Troy E M Dr
Tucker Syl A. Mr
Tuomey Laurence J Mr
Tynan Inez Ms

Wall William & Ada
Wallace Colette Ms
Wallace Brian Mr
Walsh Aileen Ms
Walsh Bernadette Mrs
Walsh Charles Mr
Walsh Martin Mr
Walsh Tony Dr
Walsh Kevin Mr
Walsh Kevin G Mr
Walsh Maureen Ms
Walsh Nolie Ms
Walsh Thomas Mr
Walshe Winifride Ms
Walton Patrick A Mr
Ward Dermot & Maeve
Weatherhead Noel Mr
Webb Valerie Ms
Whately William Dr
Whelan Barbara Ms
Whitaker Sandra Ms
White John G Mr
Woolfe Andrew Dr

Young WIlliam A Mr

DGOS & OPERA IRELAND PRODUCTIONS 1941-1996

Dates indicate the first and most recent DGOS Opera Ireland productions.

Salvatore Allegra
Ave Maria 1959
Il medico suo malgrado 1962

Michael W Balfe
The Bohemian Girl 1943

Ludwig van Beethoven
Fidelio 1954, 1994

Vincenzo Bellini
La sonnambula 1960, 1963
Norma 1955, 1989
I puritani 1975

Benjamin Britten
Peter Grimes 1990

Georges Bizet
Carmen 1941, 1989
Les pêcheurs de perles 1964, 1987

Gustave Charpentier
Louise 1979

Francesco Cilea
Adriana Lecouvreur 1967, 1980

Domenico Cimarosa
Il matrimonio segreto 1961

Claude Debussy
Pelléas et Mélisande 1948

Léo Delibes
Lakmé 1993

Gaetano Donizetti
Don Pasquale 1952, 1987
L'elisir d'amore 1958, 1996
La favorita 1942, 1982
La figlia del reggimento 1978
Lucia di Lammermoor 1955, 1991

Friedrich von Flotow
Martha 1982, 1992

Umberto Giordano
Andrea Chénier 1957, 1983
Fedora 1959

Christoph W Gluck
Orfeo ed Euridice 1960, 1986

Charles Gounod
Faust 1941, 1995
Roméo et Juliette 1945

George F Handel
Messiah 1942

Engelbert Humperdinck
Hänsel und Gretel 1942, 1994

Leoš Janáček
Jenufa 1973

Ruggiero Leoncavallo
Pagliacci 1941, 1973

Pietro Mascagni
L'amico Fritz 1952
Cavalleria rusticana 1941, 1973

Jules Massenet
Manon 1952, 1980
Werther 1967, 1977

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Così fan tutte 1950, 1993
Don Giovanni 1943, 1995
Idomeneo 1956
Die Entführung aus dem Serail 1949, 1964
Le nozze di Figaro 1942, 1991
Die Zauberflöte 1990, 1996

Jacques Offenbach
Les contes d'Hoffmann 1944, 1979

Amilcare Ponchielli
La Gioconda 1944, 1984

Giacomo Puccini
La Bohème 1941, 1996
Gianni Schicchi 1962
Madama Butterfly 1942, 1993
Manon Lescaut 1958, 1991
Suor Angelica 1962
Tosca 1941, 1996
Turandot 1957, 1986

Licinio Refice
Cecilia 1954

Gioacehino Rossini
Il barbiere di Siviglia 1942, 1991
La Cenerentola 1972, 1995
L'italiana in Algeri 1978, 1992

Camille Saint-Saëns
Samson et Dalila 1942, 1979

Bedřich Smetana
The Bartered Bride 1953, 1976

Johann Strauss
Die Fledermaus 1962, 1992
Der Zigeunerbaron 1964

Richard Strauss
Der Rosenkavalier 1964, 1984

Ambroise Thomas
Mignon 1966, 1975

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky
Eugene Onegin 1969, 1985
The Queen of Spades 1972

Giuseppe Verdi
Aida 1942, 1984
Un ballo in maschera 1949, 1992
Don Carlos 1950, 1985
Ernani 1965, 1976
Falstaff 1960, 1977
La forza del destino 1951, 1973
Macbeth 1963, 1985
Nabucco 1962, 1986
Otello 1946, 1981
Rigoletto 1941, 1994
Simon Boccanegra 1956, 1974
La traviata 1941, 1994
Il trovatore 1941, 1995

Gerard Victory
Music Hath Mischief 1968

Richard Wagner
Der fliegende Holländer 1946, 1964
Lohengrin 1971, 1983
Tannhäuser 1943, 1977
Tristan und Isolde 1953, 1964
Die Walküre 1956

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari
Il segreto di Susanna 1956

BORN IN 1987



(YOU COULD SAY WE'RE 63 YEARS ON THE MOVE.)

Surprising as it may seem, it's just 9 years since Bus Éireann was formed out of the restructured CIE.

And in that short space of time our adopted mascot has become a familiar sight on both city streets and country roads around Ireland.

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Maybe a human year being equal to seven canine years has something to do with it.

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